

3 May 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : Comments on the Senate Select Committee  
on Intelligence Draft Report on NIE  
11-3/8-76 and the B Team Effort

1. The subject report presents a generally accurate summary of judgments expressed in, and events related to the preparation of, NIE 11-3/8-76 and the associated B Team papers. Exceptions are noted in the attached preliminary comments which we received informally from NIO/SP in draft form.

2. The Senate report constitutes yet another indictment of the present way of producing NIEs, or at least, those NIEs having to do with Soviet strategic capabilities and objectives. The most serious charge--that the NIEs on Soviet strategic weapons do not adequately serve the needs of the President and senior national leaders--is levied several times in the report, but is not supported by any evidence or any effort to measure the utility of this series of NIEs for any policymaker, much less the President.

3. On page 14a and 15, the drafters of the Senate report imply that NIE 11-3/8-76 was inaccurate, unsophisticated, impassioned, unreflective of the best knowledge available, and subject to political pressure. While examples of each criticism undoubtedly can be found somewhere in the three volumes of 11-3/8, the impression left with the reader is one of general incompetence on the part of the estimators. The NIO/SP also takes exception to this part of the Senate report (in paragraph 10 of his commentary) but only to the part about political pressure; unfortunately, the Senate staffers may have a point here, since the B Team itself was a form of "political" pressure.

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4. One of the main problems which the drafters of the Senate report have with 11-3/8-76 is that the estimate does not go into sufficient detail about the broad scope of Soviet strategic power in all its aspects--economic, political, scientific, agricultural, and even environmental, as well as military (in all its aspects). This, of course, would have been far beyond the scope of 11-3/8. Nonetheless, it did not keep the Senate staffers (or the B Team) from expressing a need for such a wide-ranging discussion in the estimate.

5. In any case, the draft report identifies a critical need for improving the estimative process and finds that the extraordinary problem of divining Soviet strategic objectives calls for extraordinary remedy. (Implicit in this finding, of course, is the assumption that the answers we are looking for on this subject are available somewhere and that, given enough effort, we can find them.) The centerpiece of the extraordinary remedy which the report recommends would be a new, "widely representative, highly skilled, broadly experienced, and continuing collegial body...and a similarly expert staff," to be housed outside of CIA. A similar replacement for the present NIO setup was recommended last year by the Church Committee.

6. A number of additional recommendations are listed on pages 17-22, including the need to adopt new estimative formats, analytical techniques, review boards, editorial procedures, national-level net assessments, and, last but not least, competitive analyses (more open-ended, however). The report also puts considerable emphasis on the need for much greater participation by the policymaker in the estimative process; unfortunately, it offers no suggestions as to how to obtain such participation.

7. Attached for your background use is an appropriately dispassionate draft response to Senator Stevenson, put together by the NIO/SP. We agree with the points made in that preliminary draft.

[Redacted Signature Box]

S. N. GRAYBEAL  
Director  
Strategic Research

Attachment:  
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